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AUTHOR Bredenberg, Alice M.
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ABSTRACT

The background of Satanism and typical Satanic activities are described. It is noted that contemporary Satanism has three forms: solitary Satanists, outlaw cults, and neo-Satanic churches. Included in a description of Satanic activities are Heavy Metal music and fantasy games, both of which are intensely interesting to teenagers. The next section profiles the personality of a teenager who might succumb to cult overtures, as well as environmental factors which enhance the appeal of cultism. The personality profile includes teenagers' identity search; loners who are disconnected from family; teenagers without cultural, religious, or community values; and powerlessness. Methods for recruiting teenagers into Satanism are discussed and it is noted that groups of followers are solidified by intimidation, guilt, and fear. Finally, a scenario for program planning and rehabilitation is presented. It is claimed one of the blocks to intervention is the disbelief of the general public. However, it is noted that denial of Satanism is inappropriate for people who work with vulnerable teenagers. It is recommended that clients are stripped of all environmental symbols and are involved in group therapy. Family and community involvement, prevention programs by school counselors, and school-based mental health counselors are recommended. (ABL)

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Satanism

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Teenagers and Satanism

Alice M. Bredenberg
University of Southern Maine

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Abstract

The background of Satanism and typical Satanic activities are described. Teenage participation in Satanist activities is discussed, including the role of Heavy Metal music and fantasy games. Personality variables of teenagers and environmental factors which enhance the appeal of cultism are outlined. Guidelines for prevention, intervention and therapeutic rehabilitation are summarized.

On an ordinary day, in an ordinary middle school, a counselor is conducting a group session of eighth grade girls. A tale of fear, threats, grave robbings and disappearing teens begins to unfold before the disbelieving counselor. Lively imaginations of teenagers notwithstanding, Satanism is thriving in the community. Police have facts and figures and conduct workshops to educate the public. Surely the school personnel who work closely with teens on a daily basis need to be aware and informed. This paper attempts to perform that function.

Lyons (1988) states that the 1980's have produced a revival of Satanic-related activity in the United States. Lyons further cites examples from 1983 when a dozen churches in and around Portland, Maine, were defaced with Satanic slogans, and in January 1984, when bodies were snatched from a Tampa, Florida cemetery; two months later a similar incident in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, took place (p.101). The Police Department of Lewiston, Maine, has evidence of defacing graves with Satanic symbols. They cite local crime cases which involve Satanic practices (Lewiston Police

Department, 1990). A clinical social worker for the St. Louis police and the State of Missouri reports a dramatic increase in activity of highly secretive Satanic cults (Ostling, 1990).

Is dabbling in Satanism a kind of religious maturation or does the symbolism of evil intertwine with antisocial rage and psychotic impulses so that violence can be rationalized? Is there a connection between the rising rate of suicide among teens and the increased evidence of Satanic practices? "Social worker Dale Trahan, a Chicago expert, believes pop Satanism, often inspired by Heavy Metal music or games like Dungeons and Dragons, sometimes leads youths into the real thing" (Ostling, 1990, p.56).

The need for teacher and counselor awareness is clear. Guidelines for those who work with teens dealing with this relatively new phenomenon are not easily acquired. Research sources are illusive and scarce. Information is difficult to collate because of the lack of research, the scattered sources and biased viewpoints. Rituals are held in secret by Satanists who wish to avoid detection.

The literature is divided in its use of the capital "S" for Satan. This study consistently uses the capitalized form. Much has been written on the perverse use of children in Satanic practices. This paper limits itself to the study of teenagers' attraction to Satanism.

The background of Satanism and typical Satanic activities are described. Included in this description are Heavy Metal music and fantasy games--both intensely interesting to teenagers. The next section profiles the personality of a teen who might succumb to cult overtures, as well as environmental factors which enhance the appeal of cultism. Finally, a scenario for program planning and rehabilitation is presented.

Review of Literature

Satanist Symbols and Activities

A brief background of Satanism is required for an understanding of this scattered movement which resists definition. The 1960's "hippy" generation in the United States provided the climate for growth

of an occult revival (Lyons, 1988). Satanism, then and now, takes no standard form. "The Coven's doctrines are a blend of ancient Druidism, the teachings of the Secret Order of the Golden Dawn, Black Magick and a host of other unlawful and obnoxious practices" (Terry, 1987, p.369).

The nine Satanic statements as presented in The Satanic Bible reveal the characteristics of Satan:

1. Satan represents indulgence, instead of abstinence.
2. Satan represents vital existence, instead of spiritual pipe dreams.
3. Satan represents undefiled wisdom, instead of hypocritical self deceit.
4. Satan represents kindness to those who deserve it, instead of love wasted on ingrates.
5. Satan represents vengeance, instead of turning the other cheek.
6. Satan represents responsibility to the responsible, instead of concern for psychic vampires.

7. Satan represents man as just another animal, sometimes better, more often worse than those that walk on all fours, who, because of his "divine spiritual and intellectual development," has become the most vicious animal of all.
8. Satan represents all of the so-called sins, as they all lead to physical, mental, or emotional gratification.
9. Satan has been the best friend the church has ever had, as he has kept it in business all these years.

(LaVey, 1969, p.26)

Satanic groups continue to come and go in a variety of configurations. For example, contemporary Satanism has three forms: solitary Satanists, outlaw cults and neo-Satanic churches (Lyons, 1988).

Terry (1987) presents a well-documented picture of Satan-worshipping cults. The Jehovahs are strait-laced and uncompromising. Luciferians advocate sensuality, tranquillity and free use of narcotics. The more extreme Satanists are involved in gore, violence,

sacrifices and devil worship. Lower-ranking Satanists believe in the havoc they wreak. Cult leaders, on the other hand, are often motivated by personal power and greed more than an allegiance to Satan. Satanism becomes a means to their primary goal (Terry, 1987).

The wide variety of Satanic activities illustrates varying degrees of commitment (Wheeler, Wood & Hatch, 1988). Cult members may indicate their bondage to Satan by wearing a symbolic cord. Rituals involve chanting to unify Satan worshippers in a common activity. Black weddings are performed to join female followers with Satan. There is evidence of animal sacrifice and drinking of human blood in meetings which focus on death. Those who are attracted by Satanism may betray their interest by wearing black clothes which sometimes display Satanic symbols. They write the symbols (Appendix) on paper, walls or their own skin. Inverted crosses, pentagrams and swastikas are commonly seen on public school students. Rolling up the left shirt sleeve and painting the unclipped pinkie fingernail black is a sign of Satanistic involvement (Larson, 1989). Reading books on Satanism and listening to Heavy Metal

music with its emphasis on sex, destruction, death and Satanic activities are signs of possible interest (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988).

Teenagers passionately support their music. They idolize the androgynous, black leather-clad, ghoulish stars. This "shock rock" (Lyons, 1988, p.164) provides a way for teens to differentiate themselves from previous generations of rockers. Symbols of Satanism can be found in abundance in Heavy Metal music. It expresses raw, unbridled rage and senseless destruction without any goals. Most Heavy Metal performers deny any personal connection with Satanism. They are merely providing what sells (Lyons, 1988).

Critics of Heavy Metal music have some alarms to sound. Lyons (1988) says, "Their music, by espousing sex, bloodlust, and Devil worship, is influencing many young people to get involved in the black arts, while also inciting them to violence" (p. 163). One's capacity for horror can become blunted. Dr. Morton Kurland (cited in Lyons, 1988), a Palm Springs psychiatrist whose patient committed suicide after listening to an Ozzy Osbourne record, states that, "Sadomasochism,

blood and violence make big bucks for the producers of rock videos, but such things can push a kid over the edge" (p.171). Cardinal O'Connor (Ostling, 1990) warns that Heavy Metal rock music can "help trap people, especially teenagers into dabbling in disgraceful Satanist practices" (p.55).

Fantasy games such as Dungeons and Dragons can be misused by youths who are seeking escape from a painful or meaningless existence. Winning the game is based on using treachery and violence to elude death. There are no moral absolutes. It perfects the art of pre-meditated murder. Precise instructions directly related to the occult are included (i.e. human sacrifice). When there is a compulsion to play Dungeons and Dragons to the exclusion of other activities, harm can result. According to Larson (1989), the game allows the player to feel power to alter events, sometimes using Dungeons and Dragons instead of the real world to work out problems. The extreme danger is that the player will fuse his/her own personality with that of the chosen game character and the violent tendencies fantasized then become a part of the player's real life.

Personality Variables

What, then, is the personality profile of teens who are most attracted to the symbols and activities of Satanism? "The young are susceptible to religious and political proselytizing movements because they are 'temporary misfits' who have not yet found their place in life but are impatiently searching" (Hoffer, cited in Lyons, 1988, p.87). Klapp (1969) suggests that "if cults are booming in the twentieth century we presume it is because identity problems are also booming" (p.142). Beyond these generalizing statements about youth's identity search, particular needs of individual personalities cry out for identification with Satanism.

A survey of the literature reveals some common characteristics to form a personality profile of the teenager "at risk" to cult indoctrination. The profile includes loners who are disconnected from families and peers (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988). These teens often hold no cultural, religious or community values. They often feel like the black sheep of the family. Thoughts of revenge, suicide and death intrude daily. Feelings

of powerlessness pervade and they are unwilling or unable to compete in their society. Tabacyk and Milford (1983) found paranormal beliefs to be related to personality functioning, "especially that which concerns locus of control, death threat, self-concept, inference making, dogmatism, and irrational beliefs" (p.1036).

Charles Manson called his group "The Family," symbolizing a welcome to those who felt depersonalized, small, expendable--especially those who were battered or neglected as children. Powerful leaders and their cults offer to the alienated a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, and a promise of wish fulfillment in exciting areas such as popularity, money, romance, and sex (Lyons, 1988).

Motivational Factors

According to Christian tradition, Satan was an angelic being, once called Lucifer, created by God for good purposes, but who led a rebellion against God and was cast out of heaven (Report of the Ritual Abuse Task Force, 1989). Lyons (1988) claims that Christianity, in its zeal to combat the anti-God (Satan) provides

fertile ground for the growth of Satanism. Severe repression of pleasure can lead to indulgence. The Devil is symbolized as humanity in all its weaknesses. According to Lyons (1988), Satan derives his strength from the theological view that bodily pleasures and functions are tainted and must be subdued; whereas asceticism is good, sex is bad. Satan is seen as the carnal deity and bodily products, such as blood, urine and feces are used in cult rituals.

Larson (1989) points out a number of environmental factors which may lay the ground work for teen vulnerability to Satanic practices. Society offers "instant-everything" (p.136) for immediate gratification. This leads to a search for highs which must build in intensity. Because Satanic symbols (in Heavy Metal music, games, horror movies, television, clothes) pervade our daily existence, they are a ready and familiar source to search for possible new highs (Larson, 1989).

Satanic involvement lurks in various disguises to beckon the vulnerable teen. "Kids are impressionable, unformed, searching, vulnerable, and weak in their undeveloped characters, attracted to novelty, danger,

secrets and excitement" (Curran, 1989, p.12). The risk of evoking evil is an adventurous high. Adolescents in the Wheeler, Wood, and Hatch (1988) study report that devil worship provides an escape from boredom through activities in which there is tremendous excitement.

Initial approaches may take the form of pseudo-legitimate counseling groups. Self-awareness sessions can serve as fronts for cult recruitment, flourishing especially around campuses and military bases. Participants are screened to sift out possible recruits who are drawn into a web of deceit, rejecting traditional values and eventually converting to the twisted beliefs of group leaders (Terry, 1987). DeGrimston (cited in Terry, 1987), founder of "The Process" sect of Satanism, illustrates the misalignment of logic when he states: "Christ said: Love thine enemy. Christ's enemy was Satan...Through love, enmity is destroyed...Through love, Christ and Satan have destroyed their enmity and come together for the End. Christ to judge, Satan to execute the judgment" (p.212). In essence, the cult reasoned that killing in the name of Satan was killing for Christ--a divine mission.

Satanists are dedicated to ending the world by murder, violence and chaos (Terry, 1987). Satanists believe they will survive to build a new world of "Satanic Glory" (Terry, 1987, p. 372). Dedication to this mission is valued uppermost. Groups of followers are solidified by intimidation, guilt and fear. They are made to feel that they are a part of this mission.

Intervention Guidelines

One of the blocks to intervention with Satanists is the disbelief of the general public. Satanic acts described on an occasional news report seem too terrible to allow into one's consciousness more than fleetingly (Summit, 1985). Self protection demands denial of what has no reasonable or logical explanation. Denial by the American public is facilitated by the aura of secrecy and by the isolation of individuals and cults involved in Satanic practices.

Denial of Satanism is inappropriate for people who work with vulnerable teens. Being informed about Satanic symbols and activities is important to the teachers and counselors who are the best observers of

adolescent behavior and burgeoning deviance (Curran, 1989). Clothing and written work may betray cult interest to the informed teacher. Danger signs, such as dropping grades and abrupt altering of a teen's social group, can be noted and shared with concerned colleagues who have helping skills. Alarms must be sounded in the event of self-mutilation, interest in Satanic literature and suicidal thoughts written in poetic form. Isolation, aggression and anger are common symptoms of the person involved in Satanic activities. These manifestations are often masked cries for help. School personnel are in a position to initiate early intervention.

Once counselors and teachers get beyond their own self-protecting denial and they try to rehabilitate teenagers who practice Satanism, they must realize that the walls of teen resistance are thick and high (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988). Breaking away from cult membership is very difficult. Members sign pacts in their own blood. Each member supplies a picture of all family members, with addresses, which leaders use for coercion, blackmail and possible

physical harm. Terry (1987) believes that David Berkowitz (convicted "Son of Sam" killer in New York) was willing to take the blame for some murders he did not commit because they were cult-planned. The cult made it clear that David's family was in danger if he failed to do its bidding.

Counselors need a game plan for intervention. In order to tailor treatment to the level of disorder, "A comprehensive assessment must be conducted that encompasses self-esteem, family, unmet needs, social relationships, school performance, and health to establish a baseline for intervention" (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988, p.547). Common personality characteristics of adolescents who have been involved with Satanism include loners with feelings of alienation and isolation. They are disconnected from families, culture, peers, religions and community values. These teens avoid conventional peer-group activities. They express a lack of love in their lives and frequently think about suicide and death.

Wheeler, Wood, and Hatch (1988) recommend stripping clients of all environmental symbols--a distancing

from the Satanic subculture. The clients are then involved in social interaction with peers (group therapy) and reinforced for openness. This substitutes a more attractive and meaningful adolescent interchange in place of cult-related association. An education process is begun to gain motivational insight into why Satanism has strong appeal. Clients learn to verbalize internal and external conflicts. As experience with non-Satanic activities increases, exhilaration is felt. Personal mastery, self-control and assertion are learned in areas which are non-destructive.

A key to meeting previously unmet needs of the client is family and community involvement. Skills to develop personal human relationships is the most important change agent (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988). Love expressed to and by the teen can be healing. Including the client in activities, such as community service, may give a sense of personal worth and belonging.

The individual who has joined an exclusive Satanic group is reinforced by others of like mind. A feeling of inferiority which impelled the original attraction inverts to a feeling of superiority.

Reality fades. Weird becomes weirder and self-deceiving becomes habitual to protect the belief system. This description paints a picture thoroughly resistant to rehabilitation (Lyons, 1988). Therefore, prevention of a commitment to Satanism may be the most successful intervention, since success after-the-fact seems elusive.

School counselors need to be ever vigilant in providing prevention programs. Curran (1989) advises, "The harder we make it for our young people to be alone, disconnected from everything and everyone, the harder it will be for deviant ringmasters to round them up" (p.39). Counselors must be seen by teenagers as approachable and well-informed about supernatural powers (Lewiston, 1990). Rapport is developed by listening attentively and often without moralizing and imposing value judgments, in order to understand what involvement in Satanism means to the adolescent (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988).

Curran (1989) believes that Satanism is the least of the list of teen problems which often include: drugs, family difficulties, school failure, health (mental and physical) and sexual problems. "It is

wrong to propose that Satanism is undermining our youth. That would be mixing up cause and effect" (p.13). Curran feels we need to deal with underlying causes at an age when there is a "natural interest in counseling...the last, best time for counseling if it is to have an important and long-lasting effect" (p.14).

Curran (1989) advocates for school-based mental health counselors. This allows for prompt crisis intervention and staff consultation. Teams of peer counselors should be trained and supervised to reach out to loners and needy students and participate in group counseling for greater coverage of teens in need of help. Counseling and peer outreach are most effective as preventive measures. Prevention is the most effective intervention--reaching teens before drastic measures are required.

Summary and Conclusions

"Satanism is like a hole in the ground that some adolescents stumble into because they have been wandering... desperate, angry and alone...in a dark place where they should not be. We should wonder less at why the hole

was there than at why these young people were wandering alone in the dark" (Curren, 1989, p.13).

School counselors must rise to meet the challenge in Curran's statement. Why are the teens "wandering in a dark place" when counselors have the skills to include them in the mainstream? The less stake one has in society, the easier it becomes to free inner demons (Becker, 1963). Social acceptance negates the need for Satan as a hero. Cultivation of relationships is vital for the crucial teenage years (Wheeler, Wood, & Hatch, 1988). Getting along with others is an exhausting and exhilarating pursuit. Teenagers have the energy and enthusiasm for the growth and development required. Counselors are responsible for providing group and individual helping environments.

Wheeler, Wood, and Hatch (1988) outline some therapeutic goals that speak to the motivational themes of most adolescents involved in Satanism. Education about Satanism can bring insight into the reasons for its appeal to teens. Verbalization in a non-judgmental exchange of ideas within groups helps adolescents express and resolve conflicts instead of acting them

out. Strategies are needed to discover and replace Satanic behavior with non-Satanic activities that also bring exhilaration. A safe place must be available for the teen to express strong feelings, such as anger, pain, frustration and alienation. Issues of power, such as personal mastery, self-control and assertion need to be addressed as teens explore the purpose and meaning of life.

"Adolescent involvement in Satanism is a symptom, not the actual ailment" (Curran, 1989, p.13). Satanism is seen in schools in clothes, writings and graffiti in the form of symbols and slogans. School personnel are called to respond, not to Satanism per se, but to the troubled behavior that derives from it. The treatment of the problem of Satanism involves resolving individual issues of identity and self-esteem. To this end, families, schools and society need to better fulfill unmet needs of teenagers--to show love effectively so that a sense of belonging replaces feelings of isolation.

APPENDIX
SATANIC SYMBOLS

Satanism

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HORNED HAND



The HORNED HAND is a sign of recognition between those in the occult. It is also used by those at heavy metal concerts to affirm their allegiance to the music's message of negativism.

PENTAGRAM



The PENTAGRAM (without the circle, the PENTACLE) is used in both Black and White Magic. The top point represents the spirit. The other points represent wind, fire, earth, and water. It is believed to have power to conjure good spirits and ward off evil.

ANARCHY



The symbol of ANARCHY represents abolition of all law. First used in "punk" music, it's now widely used by heavy metal music fans.

ANTI-JUSTICE



The Roman symbol of justice was an upright double-bladed ax. The representation of ANTI-JUSTICE inverts the double-bladed ax.

ANKH



The ANKH is an ancient Egyptian symbol for life and fertility. The top portion represents the female, the lower portion the male. This symbol supposedly has magical sexual significance.

BAPHOMET



The upside-down pentagram, often called the BAPHOMET is satanic and represents the goat's head.

CROSS OF CONFUSION



The CROSS OF CONFUSION is an old Roman symbol that questions the validity of Christianity. It is used on albums by the rock group Blue Oyster Cult.

SWASTIKA



The SWASTIKA or BROKEN CROSS originally represented the four winds, four seasons, and four compass points. Its arms were at 90° angles turned the opposite way, as depicted here, and turned clockwise, showing harmony with nature. The SWASTIKA shows the elements or forces turning against nature and out of harmony.

CROSS OF NERO



This symbol represented peace in the early 60s. Among today's heavy metal and occult groups, it signifies the CROSS OF NERO. It shows an inverted cross with a cross anchor broken downward, signifying defeat of Christianity.

(Larson, 1989, p.109)

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